not take a decision, what will be the fate of the company? The whole activity will come to a standstill. I would like to know whether the Government will consider extending the period for a reasonable time, say, at least, two years, taking into consideration the fact that the company has not exploited it for the lease period of 30 years and it has a right to exploit it. Will the Government consider this proposal?

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, since there was no stay, the extension was given. But, of course, the case is going to be heard by the Supreme Court shortly. We have to wait till the Supreme Court gives a verdict, and at the appropriate time an appropriate decision will be taken by the Government subject to the decision of the Supreme Court.

Removal of 'River Princess' at Candolim Beach

*284. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:†

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are unable to remove the grounded River Princess at Candolim Beach in Goa; and

(b) whether Government plan to introduce new and more effective laws to either force the owner or to use Government machinery in such situations?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

(b) The State Government of Goa has initiated steps to enact a legislation to deal with such cases.

Statement

The District Magistrate, North Goa District had passed an order dated 21st November, 2000 under Section 133 of Cr. P.C. directing M/s Salgaoncar Mining Industries Private Ltd. (SMIPL) to refloat the

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†The question was actually asked on the floor of the house by Shri Santosh Bagrodia.

vessel River Princess and to tow it away. Since the order was not complied with, the District Magistrate passed another order dated 13th February, 2001, informing the company that action is being taken to remove the ship and costs thereof will be recovered from the company. Subsequently, the Government of Goa on 31st March, 2001 decided that a tender should be awarded to M/s SMIT International Singapore Pte Ltd. for refloating the ship and towing it away to a safe place. However, M/s SMIT International Singapore Pte Ltd. declined the offer since monsoon was round the corner. M/s. Salgaoncar Mining Industries Private Ltd. challenged the order dated 13.2.2001 of the District Magistrate, North Goa, in the court of Additional Sessions Judge, Panaji. The Additional Sessions Judge, *Panaji in his order dated 22.5.2001, set aside the order dated* 13.2.2001 of the District Magistrate. The State Government of Goa has filed an appeal against the order of the Additional Sessions Judge in the High Court of Bombay (Panaji Bench).

The Goa State Pollution Control Board has also initiated proceedings against SMIPL in February, 2001 to cause the removal of the vessel under the provisions of Sections 32, 33 and 33(A) of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974. Consequently, the Court of Judical Magistrate First Class (Mapusa) passed an order on 3/3/2001 directing SMIPL to remove the vessel within three weeks from the date of the Order. The matter is pending in the Court.

The Union Ministry of Environment and Forests issued directions dated 4th May, 2001 under Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act (EPA), 1986, directing the Company to defuel the ship, refloat and tow it away to a ship breaking yard and dismantle the same within 30 days. Since these directions were not complied with, the Central Government has filed a criminal application in the Court of Judicial Magistrate at Panaji under Section 15 of the EPA, 1986.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, fourteen months have passed since this vessel grounded and there is oil spill. The District Magistrate of Goa had made a lot of efforts. The Goa State Pollution Control Board had done something. But the Union

Ministry had opened its eyes only on 4fh May, that is, after 10-11 months, on account of my continuous efforts. In the meantime, the Coast Guard observed that a hole was intentionally made on the seaside of the vessel to jeopardise the chances of refloating the vessel. Since there is very little time left now, I would just like to know from the hon. Minister whether his Ministry is absolutely toothless, helpless, worthless and useless? I don't know what words I should use. you can't do anything for fourteen months and it may take another fourteen months. In the meantime, this vessel will be completely broken. I would like to know who would be responsible, if the entire beach is absolutely spoiled, and for the two tourist seasons that we lost. May be, ten more tourist seasons may be lost. Who will be responsible for that?

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, I humbly submit before the House that I was somewhat useful in answering my friend, Mr. Bagrodia, when he made a Special Mention, and he approached me many times, and I gave him the clarifications that he wanted. Yesterday, he sent a letter to me, and yesterday itself I sent the directions to take action against the owners as per the provisions of the Environment Protection Act, 1986.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Can you give a time limit?

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, the case is like this. On 7.6.2000, MV River Princess got grounded off Goa shore. It had no registration and it had no insurance. For the reasons best known to Mr. Bagrodia, it entered the harbour. Somehow, it ran a ground near Goa beach. Immediately after that, the State Pollution Control Board and the Coast Guard acted and contained the oil spill.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: You have given the details. You just say what you are going to do.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.